

LAND EXCHANGE—CHATTAHOOCHEE NATIONAL FOREST

JUNE 26, 1956.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State
of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. COOLEY, from the Committee on Agriculture, submitted the
following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H. R. 9339]

The Committee on Agriculture, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 9339) to authorize the exchange of certain lands of the United States situated in Union County, Ga., for lands within the Chattahoochee National Forest, Ga., and for other purposes, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

This bill would authorize the exchange of 2.1 acres of improved land within the boundaries of the Chattahoochee National Forest, Ga., for unimproved mountain land of equal value also within the boundaries of that forest. The land now in possession of the Government was acquired by donation in 1936 to be the site of a district ranger station and was used for that purpose for several years thereafter. The land is no longer being used for any administrative purpose by the Forest Service and is of little value as forest land. The mountain lands which would be received in exchange for this small improved tract will be of more value for national forest purposes.

DEPARTMENT APPROVAL

The following letter from the Department of Agriculture recommends that the bill be enacted and explains in some detail the reasons therefor.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, D. C., May 9, 1956.

HON. HAROLD D. COOLEY,
*Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
House of Representatives.*

DEAR CONGRESSMAN COOLEY: This is in response to your request of February 21 for a report on H. R. 9339, a bill to authorize the exchange of certain lands of the United States situated in Union County, Ga., for lands within the Chattahoochee National Forest, Ga., and for other purposes.

We recommend that this bill be enacted.

H. R. 9339 would authorize the Secretary of Agriculture, with the approval of the National Forest Reservation Commission, to exchange a described parcel of national-forest land situated in the Chattahoochee National Forest, Ga., for other lands of at least equal value within the exterior boundaries of the same national forest. Lands conveyed by either party could be subject to reservations, exceptions, and conditions approved by the Secretary of Agriculture. Lands acquired by the United States under the provisions of the bill would be subject to all laws, rules, and regulations applicable to national-forest lands acquired under the Weeks law of March 1, 1911.

The tract of land described in this bill was donated to the United States as a site for a ranger station. It now has on it a four-room building constructed as an office for the forest ranger but suitable for conversion to a dwelling, an old shop building, truck storage shed, tool storage shed, and oil and grease storage shed. These latter buildings are of board construction, unsealed interiors, and cement floors. The property also includes a water system, gasoline pump shed, and underground gasoline storage tanks. These improvements are practically all 20 years old and are in only fair condition. This property no longer is used as headquarters for the district ranger as the personnel formerly stationed at this site have been moved to other locations. The property is no longer needed by the Department and might be of more use in private ownership. The tract is not presently subject to any of the exchange laws applicable to the national forests or other laws governing the disposal of real property. Legislation, therefore, is necessary to authorize exchange of it or other disposal.

Under the circumstances, exchange of the property for mountain lands of at least equal value needed to consolidate the national forest, and particularly to block in game management, recreation, or other special areas would promote effective administration of the national forest.

The Bureau of the Budget advises that there is no objection to the submission of this report.

Sincerely yours,

TRUE D. MORSE, *Acting Secretary.*

○